



*Delivery Services  
Implementation Plan  
For Residential  
Customers  
AmerenCIPS and AmerenUE*

**December 15, 2000**

# **Delivery Services Implementation Plan AmerenCIPS and AmerenUE**

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### **Summary**

## **Purpose**

### **Legislative and Regulatory Background**

On December 16, 1997, Public Act 90-561 became effective, creating several new laws and making a number of changes to the Public Utilities Act (“Act”) and other statutes. Included among the new provisions in the Act are Section 16-105, which requires each Illinois electric utility to file a delivery services implementation plan, and Section 16-108, which requires Illinois electric utilities to file a delivery services tariff.

The Section 16-105 delivery services implementation plan for non-residential customers of AmerenUE and AmerenCIPS was submitted to the Commission on March 1, 1999. The plan complied with the Act to “detail the process and procedures by which each electric utility will offer delivery services to each customer class and shall be designed to insure an orderly transition and the maintenance of reliable service.” Following regulatory review, the Commission entered an order on August 25, 1999 approving the implementation plan with changes agreed to by Ameren during the course of the proceeding.

### **Delivery Services Implementation Plan**

The purpose of Ameren’s Delivery Services Implementation Plan (“DSIP”) is two-fold:

1. The DSIP addresses the transitional planning process and the Ameren plan to implement customer choice and delivery services for residential customers, especially the key action steps that will occur by May 1, 2002.
2. The DSIP also identifies processes and procedures that Ameren will use to provide customer choice and delivery services for residential customers. The DSIP explains how these processes and procedures ensure an orderly transition, maintain reliable service and manage the transition to the competitive environment. For the most part these policies and procedures are currently in place and already allow non-residential customers access to customer choice and delivery services.

Ameren’s DSIP is intended to satisfy the Section 16-105 requirements for AmerenCIPS and AmerenUE. One plan, rather than two plans, should facilitate the transition to the new competitive environment and is consistent with Ameren's DSIP for non-residential customers.

## **Transitional Planning Process**

### **Overview**

Ameren has supported and continues to support the Commission's efforts to implement customer choice in a timely and effective manner. Ameren has participated in the workshop process and regulatory proceedings and has expended significant time, money and effort to discharge its duties under Article XVI of the Act. Ameren has developed the processes, procedures and systems necessary for the implementation of customer choice for non-residential customers.

The implementing and offering of delivery services to residential customers is facilitated by the activities performed for the benefit of non-residential customers. The following information describes the efforts Ameren has completed as well as the additional effort required for the implementation of residential customer choice.

### **Project Background**

In March 1998, Ameren formed a task force with a goal of understanding and complying with the Electric Service Customer Choice and Rate Relief Law of 1997.

In May of 1998, senior management formed a project team to lead the Ameren effort to comply with the new law. Since then, many at Ameren have actively worked on implementing customer choice for Ameren's Illinois customers.

One of the Project Team's first major steps was to hire a nationally recognized consulting firm, with deregulation experience, to understand and identify work process, procedure and system changes needed to offer customer choice.

Ameren had 22 different teams working on customer choice - 10 business function teams and 12 information technology teams. These DSIP teams, consisting of 70 full-time equivalent people worked for seven months to modify and/or build ten systems to comply with the Act.

For the implementation of customer choice for residential customers, the activity centers around integrating residential customers into the processes, procedures and systems for customer choice already established by the DSIP teams.

### **Non-Residential Implementation Activities**

The following gives a brief summary of the activities undertaken to implement customer choice for non-residential customers:

Customer Service System (CSS). CSS underwent significant modifications to support deregulation in Illinois. It now supports numerous new rate classes in order to accurately bill customers for delivery services and the Power Purchase Option (“PPO”). In addition, a significant number of interfaces were built to pass data between the ARES Information Billing System (AIBS) and existing customer systems. These interfaces support functionality related to customer eligibility, DASR processing, new meter data processes, etc. CSS stores consumption meter data which is used for retail billing by RES, as well as for RES settlement purposes. This meter data is provided to RES via EDI. Finally, CSS provided extracts for the lottery and transition charge (TC) calculations.

AmerenCIPS Customer Information System (CIS). All AmerenCIPS non-residential customers were converted to CSS negating the need to modify AmerenCIPS CIS to support customer choice. Data extractions from AmerenCIPS CIS were made for lottery purposes and TC calculations.

AmerenUE Customer Information System (CIS). AmerenUE non-residential delivery service customers are being converted to CSS as needed negating the need to modify AmerenUE CIS to support customer choice. Data extractions from AmerenUE CIS were made for lottery purposes and TC calculations.

TC Rate Determination. A stand-alone system was developed to calculate the TC rate component. The system extracts usage and rate information from the customer systems. The TC rate component is calculated and either passed to or returned to CSS for delivery service and PPO billing purposes.

Lottery. Ameren successfully conducted the lottery process pursuant to the requirements of Section 16-104 of the Act.

ARES Business Center (ABC). The ARES Business Center was established to serve as a single point of contact for RES and Metering Services Providers (MSP). The staff of the ABC processes records and administers RES and MSP registrations, and maintains contracts and customer portfolio data. The ARES Business Center also issues bills to RES for transmission services, energy imbalance charges, plus charges and fees for metering, penalties and other services.

ARES Information and Billing Solution. The AIBS system was developed jointly with other Illinois utilities to manage the relationship with the RES. The system has since been modified to manage the relationship with the MSPs. The system is actually comprised of three separate applications. The first application processes RES and MSP enrollments and manages portfolios. The other two applications perform load profiling and settlement calculations. The staff of the ARES Business Center utilizes AIBS to perform their duties.

Meter Data Warehouse (MDW). Ameren changed its meter data processes to support deregulation. The Meter Data Warehouse was established to store interval meter data for internal and external access. The data is used for retail billing by RES, as well as for RES settlement purposes.

Energy Supply Operations (ESO). The fundamental responsibilities of the ESO at Ameren to schedule energy and transmission services did not change. However, increased volume brought about by customer choice necessitated automation of processes. To accommodate this increase in volume, Ameren initiated NERC Tag automation, OASIS automation and automated tools for enhanced scheduling capabilities. Automated interfaces were built to provide schedules, reservations, pricing information and other data from the ESO information systems to AIBS for settlement.

EDI Gateway and Maps. EDI transaction capabilities and interfaces with new and existing systems were developed to handle transactions between Ameren, RES and MSPs.

Accounting System Modifications. In order to properly account for revenues received from RES through AIBS, interfaces to existing financial systems were built. Financial reports were modified and new general ledger accounts were created.

Internet Publishing. Ameren has published information related to customer choice on the Internet. This includes the RES Handbook, the MSP Handbook and the Customer Handbook for non-residential customers and generic load profile information by rate class.

Customer Communications. Customers have been informed of their eligibility for the lottery and the PPO tariff through the required mailings. Customer Service employees in Ameren's Contact Center answer customer questions on deregulation, as well as direct customers to the Ameren web site for additional information.

Employee Training. Ameren employees have been trained in using new and modified processes, procedures and systems designed to facilitate customer choice. Employees have been trained to explain to customers the workings of delivery services and customer choice at Ameren.

Distribution Operations Activities. Ameren Distribution Operations personnel provide the same level of service for distribution operations activities regardless of the energy supplier. Personnel prioritize, dispatch and execute field orders without knowledge of the energy supplier. Power restoration is based on the same operational criteria utilized before the advent of delivery services.

Ongoing Activities. Ameren is continuing to make changes to information systems, including CSS, AIBS, MDW, ESO and EDI to adapt to the changing business needs and regulatory requirements that are dictated by the evolving open-access market. Specifically, Ameren has recently made significant changes to these systems to

accommodate Meter Unbundling (99-0013) and to meet the requirements that have resulted from the Uniformity Docket (00-0494).

### **Residential Implementation Activities**

The following gives a brief summary of the application of existing processes, procedures and systems to implement customer choice for residential customers:

Customer Service System (CSS). To date, none of Ameren's residential customer accounts have been converted to CSS. In order to avoid making changes to legacy customer systems, all of Ameren's Illinois residential customers will be converted to CSS prior to becoming eligible on May 1, 2002. Tariff modeling and bill preparation modifications will need to be made in order to bill these customers on both bundled and unbundled tariffs. In addition, a significant amount of testing will be performed prior to production billing in order to verify the accuracy and timely issuance of bills. Very few additional modifications will be needed to accommodate customer choice for residential customers. These additional modifications can be avoided because Ameren does not plan to change the customer enrollment, billing or settlement processes for residential customers.

AmerenCIPS Customer Information System (CIS). All AmerenCIPS residential customers will be converted to CSS negating the need to modify AmerenCIPS CIS to support customer choice.

AmerenUE Customer Information System (CIS). AmerenUE Illinois residential customers will be converted to CSS negating the need to modify AmerenUE CIS to support customer choice.

TC Rate Determination. The TC Rate Determination system will be used to calculate the TC rate component for residential customers.

Lottery. Use of the lottery system will not be required since all residential customers receive customer choice on May 1, 2002.

ARES Business Center (ABC). The ABC will continue to serve as a single point of contact for RES and MSPs and will continue to perform duties related to these interactions. Additional staffing will be added to handle the increased volume of customer inquiries and enrollments. The ABC will take an active role in employee training and customer education to ensure a smooth transition to full open access for Illinois residential customers.

ARES Information and Billing Solution (AIBS). The AIBS system was designed to handle several million customers. There are no anticipated changes in the enrollment, profiling or settlement processes. As a result, there are no plans to make changes to the AIBS system to handle residential open access. However, there are plans to do extensive testing with switching large numbers of residential customers after the successful

conversion of residential customers to the CSS system. The staff of the ABC will utilize AIBS to perform their duties related to residential customer choice.

Meter Data Warehouse (MDW). The MDW only stores data from interval meters. Since no residential customers have interval meters for billing purposes, the MDW will not be impacted by residential customer choice.

Energy Supply Operations (ESO). ESO will use established systems and processes to schedule energy and transmission services for residential customers.

EDI Gateway and Maps. EDI transaction capabilities and interfaces already developed will be used to handle transactions between Ameren and RES on behalf of residential customers.

Accounting System Modifications. Additional modifications to accounting systems and reporting will not be required.

Internet Publishing. Ameren will continue to publish information related to customer choice on the Internet. This includes the modified RES handbook and the new Customer Handbook for residential customers. Ameren is currently developing the Ameren Customer Information Website (ACIW). The ACIW will allow customers and RES (with proper authorization) to obtain customer information over the Internet. The ACIW will automate and streamline several processes that are currently handled manually.

Customer Communications. Ameren will fully participate in the customer education workshops and implement the work plan developed in the process.

Employee Training. Ameren employees will be given additional training in the unique aspects of customer choice brought about by residential customer eligibility.

Distribution Operations Activities. Ameren Distribution Operations personnel will continue to provide the same level of service for distribution operations activities regardless of the energy supplier.



## **ARES Business Center Activities**

### **Purpose**

Ameren created a business center that serves as a single point of contact for RES and MSPs. A staff of four processes, records and administers RES and MSP registrations, records and administers RES and MSP contracts with Ameren and processes and maintains RES and MSP customer portfolio data. The ABC calculates and issues bills to RES for transmission services, energy imbalance charges, and charges and fees for metering, penalties and other services. The “ARES” designation does not limit availability to ARES only. The ABC interacts with all retail suppliers and providers.

### **ARES Information and Billing Solution (AIBS)**

Ameren worked with Commonwealth Edison and Illinois Power to design and develop a consistent, uniform and manageable computer system for managing the relationship between Ameren, RES and customers. Ameren has subsequently modified AIBS to manage the relationship with MSPs. AIBS tracks the necessary information about RES and MSPs. AIBS automates the customer enrollment process, so that when the RES or MSP submits the appropriate information indicating the customer’s selection, the new system validates the enrollment to the RES or the MSP.

AIBS also signals CSS to transfer the customer to delivery services at Ameren. AIBS helps Ameren create a portfolio of customers for each RES or MSP. When settlement is performed each month, AIBS calculates the transmission and ancillary services charges, including charges for energy imbalances (difference between the amount of energy supplied by the RES to Ameren’s system and the amount of energy used by the RES’ customers). AIBS also performs the billing for other services provided by Ameren to the RES and MSPs.

### **Residential Implementation Activities**

The ABC will continue to offer the same services to RES on behalf of residential customers. The processes, procedures and systems including AIBS are in place and do not require significant modifications to handle the influx of residential customer related business.

Due to an increase in the volume of transactions that residential customer choice will bring about, the ABC may require additional employees. ABC employees will receive additional training in order to provide an orderly transition to residential customer choice.

### **The RES Handbook**

After the AmerenCIPS and AmerenUE Illinois delivery services tariffs themselves, the RES Handbook provides the primary guidance to RES interested in providing power and energy service in Illinois, as well as, information on processes and procedures for a RES to effectively interact with Ameren. The RES Handbook supports the goals of Ameren's DSIP in insuring an orderly transition to the competitive environment and the maintenance of reliable service.

The RES Handbook is designed specifically for RES interested in providing power and energy service within Ameren's Illinois service area. The RES Handbook presents a RES with a comprehensive overview of Ameren's processes and procedures so that RES can better interact with Ameren in establishing and providing power and energy service.

The RES Handbook is a working document that is designed to address the challenging issues raised by establishing the new competitive electric marketplace in Illinois. It reflects the results established in the deregulation legislation, ICC orders, working group consensus results, uniformity requirements and Ameren's current thinking for a timely and successful deployment of the new market structure. Ameren intends to modify this document to reflect current regulatory and/or business process and procedural changes as required and without notice. The advent of customer choice for residential customers is expected to bring about additional changes.

It is critical that the Commission treats the RES Handbook as a living document since it continues to provide critical information to RES in their ongoing interaction with Ameren. Ameren has reviewed the RES Handbook, but has made no changes to specifically address residential open access. As rules are developed to address issues, such as customer education, Ameren will update the RES Handbook to incorporate these additional requirements.

### **Customer Handbooks**

Ameren's current Customer Handbook is designed to answer customers' questions about delivering energy, switching to another energy supplier, paying bills and other matters. It explains the customer's rights and responsibilities in understandable terms. It also provides the customer with resources to answer additional questions or help solve problems.

The current Customer Handbook was designed to meet the needs of commercial and industrial customers. Ameren has also created a Residential Customer Handbook that is intended to provide residential customers with the information that they will need to understand and participate in the open access electricity market.

The Residential Customer Handbook describes the processes and procedures contained in the Delivery Services Tariff, the Retail Electric Supplier Tariff, and the RES Handbook

that affect the customer in its receipt of energy services from a RES and delivery services from Ameren.

The Residential Customer Handbook is arranged by topic; Energy Choices, Working with RES and Payment Provisions. The handbook informs the customer that service requests may not be submitted by a RES unless the customer has signed a letter of agency. It also provides the customer with fee information. Finally, the handbook notifies the customer that many of the procedures that it has come to count on in the past will not change, such as billing and payment terms for services provided by Ameren and the connection to the Company's distribution facilities.

The Residential Customer Handbook also provides commonly called phone numbers and website addresses that the customer can use to acquire additional information. The full text of the Residential Customer Handbook is provided at Attachment A. All of Ameren's customer handbooks are available on Ameren's website.

Ameren will fully participate in the residential customer education workshops and will implement the work plan developed in the process. The Residential Customer Handbook will be modified to reflect the information content and design that result from the workshop process.

## **Education and Training**

### **Customer Education**

As discussed above, Ameren plans to fully participate in the residential customer education workshops. The end product of these workshops will provide guidelines and content for residential customer education on Customer Choice. Ameren will make the required mailings provided for in the Act. Those mailings will be in the form of the educational materials developed in the residential customer education workshop process.

Ameren will make the Residential Customer Handbook available to all customers. The handbook will offer educational content and design that parallels the customer education workshop's final materials.

Ameren will continue to maintain customer choice information on its web site. Other information relative to residential customer choice, including the Residential Customer Handbook will also be posted to the web site.

Customer contact personnel will continue to answer customer questions about customer choice. They will also refer customers to the Ameren and ICC web sites for additional information.

### **Employee Training**

Ameren will provide additional training to employees with the advent of customer choice for residential customers. Specifically, new ABC employees necessitated by the increase in work volume will be trained in all aspects of the processes, procedures and systems employed in their function. Other ABC employees will receive additional training on the unique aspects of providing delivery services to residential customers. Similarly, customer contact personnel will be given supplemental customer choice training in all aspects of providing residential customer service.

### **Summary**

Ameren has taken its responsibility under the Act seriously. This DSIP provides evidence that Ameren intends to comply with the spirit and intent of the Act as it applies to residential customers. As required by the ICC in its Order in Docket No. 99-0070, the DSIP (1) addresses the transitional planning process and (2) details the processes and procedures Ameren will use to provide customer choice and delivery services.

Ameren has created or modified processes, procedures and systems to provide delivery services to non-residential customers. For the most part, the capabilities developed for non-residential customers are directly applicable to residential customers.

Residential customers will be converted to the CSS customer billing system which will facilitate the provision of customer choice. The RES Handbook will be modified for residential customer choice if necessary. Residential customers will be provided with a unique Residential Customer Handbook to instruct them on their options under customer choice. The content of the Residential Customer Handbook and all other residential customer educational materials will align with the materials developed in the customer education workshops.

For the most part Ameren will utilize existing capabilities developed for customer choice for non-residential customers in providing delivery services to residential customers. These capabilities have proven to be effective since the implementation of customer choice on October 1, 1999. Ameren will stay on course and be ready for residential customer choice on May 1, 2002.